

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

The Development Objective

The Symposium urged that the basic development objective within the region should be the elimination of poverty through the equitable distribution of economic activity, the equitable sharing of assets, and the harnessing of local resources in the common interest of the general well-being.

Therefore, it advocated the adoption and implementation of strategies directed towards:

- (a) including among the major development thrusts the priority development of agriculture and other sectors with high employment potential;
- (b) narrowing the income differentials between households with the aim of achieving certain minimum consumption targets in respect of essential items for all groups in the community;
- (c) the relative improvement of incomes and conditions of life in the rural areas as compared with those in urban areas;
- (d) achieving more balanced growth between the MDC's and the LDC's of CARICOM.
- (e) maximising local participation in the processing, elaboration and marketing of regional primary commodities principally destined for extra-regional markets.

With regard to agriculture and its role in employment generation and overall development, the Symposium observed that a new emphasis is required on the development of the agricultural sector, noting that data in respect of Jamaica indicate that "the agricultural sector generates directly and indirectly about two to three jobs per J\$1,000 of final demand."¹ With

1 McIntyre Appendix I (A1.3)

respect to food processing the data show that "the direct and indirect employment coefficients total 1.068, with 0.633 being the indirect employment coefficient"², which is the highest figure for the individual sectors of the economy.³

It was in this context that the Symposium invited attention to the possibilities that may be opened for employment creation in the Commonwealth Caribbean with an annual food import bill which has been estimated by the Caribbean Development Bank to have reached EC\$1 billion in 1974!

Regional Devices for Development and the Regional Perspective Plan

CARICOM

The Symposium noted that CARICOM provides a juridical framework for the co-ordination of national development plans and the establishment of Regional sectoral programmes, and thus accommodates the basic institutional foundations for the kind of economic strategy which the Symposium has advocated.

In this regard the Symposium applauded the pioneers responsible for the institution of the Caribbean Community and Common Market, and expressed an exhortation for its optimal development and the maximal conversion of its potential into an efficient and concretely effective agency of Caribbean development both on the national and regional levels. Specific recommendations were made in this regard on the Regional Perspective Plan. They are reported in a section which deals with the plan, and which follows immediately on the next.

The Caribbean Development Bank

The role of the Caribbean Development Bank in the context of Regional and national development in the several states was well appreciated by the Symposium, which also recognised its limitations in respect of the general development effort, particularly regarding the LDC's. Therefore, recommendations were made for the provision of supplementary facilities with regard to the LDC's.

These are reported in the next chapter.

The Regional Perspective Plan

The Symposium noted that the Georgetown Accord (1973) provided the basis for agreement on the Treaty of Chaguaramas (1972) which established the Caribbean Community. It noted further that the Georgetown Accord mandated the Secretariat to commence the technical work on the preparation of a Regional perspective plan "designed to make the fullest use of the Region's resources, paying special regard to the need to achieve specific

2 McIntyre Loc cit
3 McIntyre Loc cit

development targets in the Less Developed Countries".

Thus the Symposium recognised that the character, objectives and scope of the Regional Perspective Plan are yet to be specifically defined. It was acutely conscious of the need for specific thrusts, and because it was aware that the traditional preoccupation of perspective plans is a concern merely with providing broad guidelines for development, the Symposium recommended that:

- (i) The Regional Perspective Plan should be enunciated in terms not of targets for growth in GNP, but of specific goals expressed in relation to the satisfaction of essential needs and the creation of employment opportunities.
- (ii) Included in the Plan should be an operational dimension which would embody Regional programmes and projects that are amenable to early implementation.
- (iii) The Regional Food Plan (the technical work on which, the Symposium was assured, is comparatively advanced) should be a prime candidate for selection within such an operational dimension in the overall perspective plan.

Enhancement of the Perspective and Implementation Strategies

Human resources

Development of human resources was considered by the Symposium to be of paramount importance in the overall strategies for development in the Region; and in order to build a positive system of values and attitudes which will promote maximum growth of the population and its resources, it was considered that:

- (i) Youth should be regarded as a vital resource in national development.
- (ii) All policy and planning should be developed within the context of an ideology which would inspire total commitment and involvement.
- (iii) The agencies through which this should be effected should comprise all existing functional institutions including the churches.

- (iv) The methods to be used for the accomplishment of this goal should make extensive use of:
 - (a) dialogue with and involvement of the population, especially of the young people;
 - (b) restructured formal and non-formal education, with special reference to community development, co-operatives, and the national youth service schemes;
 - (c) existing youth programmes as a vehicle for changing attitudes and including in the population an orientation towards active participation and involvement in national development.
- (v) Specific attention should be paid to rural development within the context of overall national development plans.

To this end the Symposium advocated that the following be considered of prime importance:

- (a) the establishment of rural institutions, e.g. local government or other community organisations with responsibilities wider than those now obtaining;
- (b) that governments, in collaboration with these institutions, initiate measures to improve the quality of life in the rural areas, thereby reducing the urban drift and preserving the human resources necessary for the development of agriculture and related industries.

Agriculture and Fisheries

The Symposium recommended:

- (i) Immediate implementation of the Regional Food Plan.
- (ii) That a special policy of import controls be devised to encourage the replacement of imported food.
- (iii) That new systems, e.g. co-operatives, be introduced to provide for maximum involvement as well as for optimum sizes of farming units.

- (iv) That land redistribution policies should be devised, and implemented, with a view to encouraging self-employment in farming.
- (v) The introduction of changes in the traditional methods of production to ensure maximum yields.
- (vi) The development of effective and efficient marketing facilities.
- (vii) The adoption of increased minimum wages for farm workers.
- (viii) In respect particularly of fisheries, the establishment of Regional facilities for training supplemented by adequate and efficient extension services.

Industry

The Symposium urged that:

- (i) Agro-based industries should be developed with the use, as far as possible, of technology appropriate to the individual circumstances involved.
- (ii) There be a wider generation of crafts and cottage industries which offer development as well as employment generating possibilities, particularly through the instrumentality, on appropriate scales, of indigenous technologies.
- (iii) Local entrepreneurship should be encouraged and the appropriate institutions be asked to provide support systems.

Tourism

In respect of tourism, the Symposium advocated:

- (i) An examination of the policies of governments for the development of tourism.
- (ii) The conduct of a careful analysis of the side effects of tourism.
- (iii) National and/or Regional ownership of the industry.
- (iv) Maximum utilisation of local foods.
- (v) Maximum local involvement in the subsidiary services sector of the industry.

- (vi) Employment to the maximum possible extent of trained nationals.
- (vii) The encouragement of intra-regional tourism.

Rural Development

The Symposium urged that rural development be pursued as a major strategy in pursuance of the overall development objectives; and emphasised the desirability in this regard of optimum development and use of the human resources in an integrated approach to rural development.

More specific recommendations which impinge on the topic of rural development but which relate directly to agriculture and fisheries have already been reported. They appear under the caption "Agriculture and Fisheries" and are to be found in the third sub-section immediately preceding this one (page 11).